

## A NOTE ON THE EVOLUTION OF PERSONALITY

Kinji IMANISHI

### I

As culture varies, so does personality correspondingly, and different personalities are to be observed between those who have acquired different cultures. This should be a major premise for a branch of cultural anthropology — culture and personality — to be set up. And this premise granted, the following proposition will necessarily come to be recognized that, as, on tracing back the history of man, it cannot be denied that his culture has changed from the simple form in the primitive age to such a complicated one as seen today, his personality must also have undergone a change from personality corresponding to the simple culture to that corresponding to the complicated one; namely, the ancestors of man, tens or hundreds and thousands of years ago, who had acquired a culture different from ours today must have had a personality different from our also,

The anthropologists of the culture and personality school usually bring forward one more item, society, besides culture and personality. It may be said that originally, among these three, society decidedly preceeding the other two, both culture and personality were born as devices, in a certain dimension in the course of the evolution of the society, for smoothing its function and perpetuating it thus. But this has not been enough, so far, to make it clear which, culture or personality, was needed to be born first. It was in 1952 that I for the first time took up this problem, when I assumed that 'the limits where culture can be recongnized are those where personality is recongnized' (Imanishi, 1952, p.93), though, at that time, too, it(there) remained a question that, if personality performs the function of 'the unified system of actions', its existence might be traced up in some shape even among the creatures in pre-culture stage.



Afterwards, in the behaviour of birds or beasts, those that might be called 'cultural' gradually became to be noticed, among which the cultural behaviors of the Japanese macaque, on which we have been making observations for over ten years, are minutely stated of in Kikuchi's reports(1956, 1959), while, Zinjanthropus excavated in east Africa presenting with its stone wares of 'a set and regular pattern' which (may) belong to Oldowan culture(Leakey, 1961), we cannot deny today that even the oldest fossil belonging to Hominidae was cultural already and had advanced into the stage of tool-maker beyond that of tool user. In spite of all this, no minute discussions so far have been made on the culture of non-hominid primates living today or the personality corresponding to the culture of the fossil Hominidae. I shall before presenting my opinion, introduce that of A. Irving Hallowell, one of the few persons who have shown a deep interest in this problem of the evolution of personality.

## II

First, I shall make clear, by the following quotation, his basic view on 'evolution'. "To begin with. . . ."(Hallowell, 1950, p. 249)

On this standpoint, while, acknowledging (admitting) that among the behaviors of non-hominid primates there are some which are not innate but are acquired by learning and handed down by learning, he had no objection to regarding it as a forerunning phenomenon of culture, he suggested that we should have a technical term 'protocultural' to express such a forerunning phenomenon through the reason that, if we directly called it 'culture', we might be unable to make a clear distinction between the varied levels of behavioral evolution (Hallowell, 1956, p. 231). "In the past, the social transmission . . . ." (Hallowell, 1960, p. 337).

By the word 'protocultural' he meant to express not only the culture recognized among the living non-hominid primates but also that forerunning one which might probably exist among the early Hominidae found now as fossils.

Leakey's Zinjanthropus, however, according to archaeological conception, using stone wares that might well pass as culture, if this is to be called 'protocultural', a precise distinction should here be made between the term and 'cultural(eucultural)'.



Hallowell thought that what makes this distinction is the possibility of extrinsic symbolization. And he also wrote in another part, "It is difficult to imagine, . . . ."(Hallowell, 1960, p. 333), by which he seems so far to have meant symbolization accompanying linguistic activity.

As, according to Oakley(1954, p. 18) the exirtence of speech need not be necessarily supposed in the social life of not only the first human tool-users but also the tool-makers, the evolution of culture goes through the stages of using tools, making tools and the birth of speech, and, if we are to follow Hallowell's opinion, the term 'culture' cannot be used except after the stage of the birth of speech, which, being too strict, gives some way an impression that it is too narrow.

But his aim must have lain, as shown in these words: "In anthropological writing. . . . " (Hallowell, 1961, P. 252), in his effort to catch the evolution of culture connecting it with that of personality. Personality structure written here is, of course, that coming from psychoanalysis after Freud, consisting of the three factors id, ego and superego.

He takes up first of these three factors: "Since in ontogenetic development, . . . . (Hallowell, 1960, p. 350). While Freud himself had never studied the development of personality structure phylogenetically, Hallowell thought that what was to be acknowledged as a germination phenomenon of ego functions had already existed among the Anthropoidae and that naturally such phenomenon might find its place among the early hominids as well (Hallowell, 1961, p. 251). But, in that stage of ego function before speech, i.e., having no means of extrinsic symbolization accordingly, self-objectification not being possible, an experience of one individual cannot be transmitted to another. A certain monkey happens to pick up a(some) caramel, which it eats and finds it to be nice, but it cannot tell another monkey, saying, "This is very nice, just eat and see". There is no means of propagation except following another's example.

Also on superego, he says, taking incest taboo for an example, "Consequently, incest taboo . . . . (Hallowell, 1960, p. 347); that is, such a complicated culture as incest taboo can be formed only in a society where we can observe the existence of personality structure which enables



self-objectification and symbolic means to be made.

Appreciating this, we still surmise that, since, even in the Japanese macaque society, self-other orientation is possible and differentiated response can be made to each other, their ranking system has been established. Therefore, we cannot but find his opinion one-sided when seeing the evolution of personality geneologically, as he did not seek for germination phenomenon of superego functions among them, while he actually recognized that, even in the Japanese macaque society, the process of identification is necessary for socialization of the infants (Imanishi, 1957). Identification having been suggested, superego cannot be cut off the matter. Then, how, in the course of evolution of personality structure, do ego and superego appear? ——— this is a problem on which Hallowell failed to give a full explanation.

### III

As for ego and superego, we must, before we discuss on their birth, give definition of their function. According to Hallowell, ego functions are, ". . . . Ego functions have a wide range; . . . . (Hallowell, 1960, p. 349).

If personality, as stated at first, is requisite for creatures as a "unified system of actions" and has developed as such, the ego functions are not in nature to be limited to human beings or non-hominids, the existence of similar functions should be expected in common with creatures of higher evolution such as birds or beasts, and here I find a touching point between the ' . . . . of creatures' of which I have long been thinking. Accordingly, to me, the following quotation from Stanley Cobb is not very new, which Hallowell hesitates to accept at once.

". . . . 'I would say (it is) . . . . ' (Hallowell, 1960, p. 349)

By the way, here the term 'ego' is replaced by the expression 'awareness of self', and the phenomena expressed by a wareness of self or self-awareness, according to Hallowell, are treated as those in a higher stage.



" . . . . . The initial development of the ego process . . . . ."  
(Hallowell, 1961, p. 251)

Self-awareness here used, however, I shall interpret as meaning self-objectification, and at the same time, pay special attention to Cobb who has purposely used the adjective 'rudimentary', thinking that, wherever rudimentary ego functions are observed, there surely follows rudimentary self-awareness. Then, to say nothing of speech or culture, even those singly-living beasts such as bears or antelopes which never form an organized social unit as monkeys, so far as they maintain the shape and functions worth being called mammals, must have, compares with a solitary monkey dropped off the troop, ego functions and self-awareness of their own not so unfavorable. This hypotheses is greatly important as a starting point for theorizing personality evolution.

As for socialization and normative orientation which were taken up by Hallowell, it is only among those animals which form a troop as an organized social unit and each individual of which lives as a member of the troop that they come to be of any concern, and such matter as this is more suitable to be connected with superego functions rather than with ego functions. Then, what activities do ego functions play? " . . . . . For, while on the one hand . . . . ."(Hallowell, 1950, p. 253)

Hallowell uses the phrase 'ontogenetically rooted', but I intend rather to think a phase of superego in personality structure had already been rooted phylogenetically when the ancestors of primates became to form an organized social unit. In the first stage, of course, they may have been but rudimentary superego functions corresponding to rudimentary ego functions and no other means of social learning existed better than mimicry. In spite of all this, in a rather advanced society as the Japanese macaque's, "ontogenetical behaviors" are distinguished, as I often exemplify, from "phylogenetical behaviors" and a monkey of a troop stands against an enemy, uttering the warning call "Kwan" which is never uttered by a single individual that has fallen off a troop. Moreover, this is not a direct mimicry in the presence of the model, but a complete reproduction in its absence of what



he saw once, and it was my view that, even if there might be recognized rudimentary superego, with them, yet in the process of its forming, an important part must be played by identification (Imanishi, 1960, pp. 1 - 8).

#### IV

The difference in the generating condition between ego and superego was said to lie in that, while ego is recognized even in such mammals as bears or antelopes that live singly, as far as superego, its functions become to be of some meaning, however rudimentary they may be, among those living in troops such as monkeys. But this is not enough to explain the relation between ego and superego in the generating structure. In structure, it may be thought that ego lying in the base, superego is formed in a part of it, or, while ego and superego exercise different functions respectively with us human beings, in a generating and rudimentary stage seen in non-hominid primates, they, being not yet differentiated, may remain controlled on one principle.

I shall treat (study about) this point, basing on functions, and, from the viewpoint of behaviors, more closely. For this purpose, taking up first ego functions which are found in common with both animals living singly and those in troops and, in that meaning are more basic, I will ask a question ----- "In what condition should those animals be for ego functions ever said to be working smoothly?", and the answer may be that ego functions go smoothly if an animal is able to have food or sleep in safety whenever it wants to and to carry on without hindrance a life required of it or admitted to it; that is, personality as 'a unification of actions' has economy of its own and the unification is fully realized where there is no waste of energy.

However, things will not go so easily at first. During the inexperienced period, there will be trial and error. But animals soon learn to make the best of their experiences, by which they prevent waste of energy and unify their actions or, in another expression, regain their subjecthood and have



it firmly established. Hallowell has made the following quotation from the psychologists, Mowrer and Ullman. " . . . . . An animal . . . . . 'is capable of carrying away . . . . .'"(Hallowell, 1950, p. 251) The fact that even a singly living animal, not wandering about all the time, becomes to have its own territory established cannot be without(out of) connection with this application of experience.

Here I must make an important proposition. An animal happens to meet with the same situation as before. Does he recollect the former experience and make decision upon reflection before he takes action every time as it, finding his reaction last time a failure, averts from repeating it or, having succeeded before, prefers to do so again? It seems not so. So long as he acts with an object (i.e., subjectively takes a unified action), a goal-oriented action is made, quicker than thought, intuitively throwing away the bad and taking up the good, which is often apt to be interpreted as a behavior led by perception but, on the contrary, behind these intuitive behaviors, the experiences of the past lie working and this point is of great importance.

Practically, however simple the animal life is compared with the human life, a perfectly same situation cannot be met with, it being at the most a situation very similar to the previous one that is to be experienced. In spite of this, they are capable of taking a necessary, goal-oriented action in an instant, because the reaction by animals with sharp ego functions is flexible enough, not simply mechanical. And with those animals that have no function of extrinsic symbolization and naturally no past or future such as we have, an experience of the past may not be of any meaning unless it is ready in the present form to be instantly adapted for the present requirement instead of being drawn out of the past. But as to by what arrangement this comes to be possible, in spite of its being a problem of so great importance, studies in the field of psychology, to our regret, seem to have scarcely been made so far.

With a singly living creature, when he utilizes his experiences, his opponent is, in most cases, the natural environment around him, but with one in a troop, on the other hand, there is added a new element, the social



cope with this environment, he must, keeping the waste of energy as little as possible, be able exactly to make goal-oriented behaviors he aims at (directs). This means to him weighting of work the more, but, it being a work belonging to ego function, both the behaviors against the natural environment and those against the social one are, in this point, unified on one principle, no contradiction arising between them.

By the way, 'goal-oriented behaviors he directs' mentioned here by me strictly means the behaviors aiming at satisfying the individual's wants, which corresponds to what I called previously "individual-in-center behaviors", and, so far as behaviors of this kind are concerned, it may be natural that there should be no difference in principle between singly living animals and troop-living ones. However, among troop-livers, with such higher ones as monkeys, there appears, besides the individual-in-center behaviors, "the troop-in-center behaviors", which are often contradictory or quite opposite to them. Then, a certain device must be formed in order to learn this new kind of behaviors, and that device was identification arising based on the monkey baby's dependency on the parent. But here, even this identification, in non-humanoid primates with no extrinsic symbolization, has a manifestation system (revelation structure) very similar to utilization of a general experience, which should be an important point, too, to be carefully studied; i.e., in the latter case, the creature reproduces, not a direct experience of his, but that of the individual that has been the object of his identification. For instance, when a male gorilla threatens an invader, roaring fiercely, he is not doing it consciously, ——— "our leader has threatened the enemy roaring fiercely and so I must do in the same way after him", and, to fill sudden needs, even if there is no leader at the spot, he must be ready to take the same troop-in-center behavior as the leader did, for otherwise it would be of no use. Thus, though there is that difference between individual-in-center and troop-in-center behaviors or between a direct experience by one's own action and an indirect experience by the leader's



action, these quite accord in the point that the individual is always prepared to employ, according to the circumstances, a behavior in which his experience is made the most of.

Therefore, in this stage, we cannot suppose that they do as they must or they don't do as they mustn't. It may be said that, while identification exists, they have not reached to the stage where superego functions are recognized. Surely, they stay still in a lower stage viewed from personality structure. So I do not say that, because there is a taboo in the monkey society, they have no incest between mother and child, and as, in spite of no taboo existing, no such incest is observed, the origin of incest taboo can be followed up to the time before taboo, i.e., before culture (Imanishi, 1961). Seeing that, even with our behaviors, we are not doing what can be explained of its reason for every time, no matter how we live in culture with extrinsic symbolization highly developed, we, still having that simple protopersonality corresponding to protoculture lying hidden in the base of our behaviors, may sometimes be led by its fine intuition which we do not understand logically.